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LOUGH NEAGH.

The Lake was that deep blue, which night
Wears in the zenith moon's full light;
With pebbles shining thro' like gems
Lighting Sultanas' diadems:
A little isle laid on its breast,
A fairy isle in its sweet rest.

THE situation of Lough Neagh, which resembles an inland sea, renders it an object of great interest and importance. It is surrounded by five of the richest and most populous counties in Ulster: Antrim to the north and east; Down towards the south-east; Armagh to the south; Tyrone to the west; and Londonderry to the west and north. It is not wonderful, that, like many objects of less importance, it should have the honour of a fabulous origin. We are told, accordingly, by some of our early writers, that it suddenly burst out, in the reign of Lugaiddh Rhiabderg, in the 56th year of the Christian era, and was then called Lion Mhuine, which words have the same signification as its present title! Doubierdieu informs us on the authority of the Bishop of Derry, the late Lord Bristol, that "in a monastery on the Continent, a manuscript existed, which mentions, that in the sixth century, a violent earthquake, had thrown up the rock at Toome, which, by obstructing the discharge of the rivers, had formed this body of water; and that Lough Erne, in the county Fermanagh, was produced at the same time!"

The ancient name of the Lake, Echach or Eacha, in the Erse language, signified 'divine', and also 'loch' or 'lake'.

In the same language, ‘neasg’ or ‘naasgh,’ ‘a sore,’ might have alluded to its supposed virtues, in curing cutaneous disorders, and thence, be easily converted into Neach or Neagh. The names of Lough Sidney, and Lough Chichester, in honour of the Lord Deputies, Sir Henry Sidney, and Sir Arthur Chichester, were successively given to it; but they have been unable to supplant the more ancient though less refined appellation. In the old maps of Ireland, it has been represented as occupying a plain of 100,000 acres. Lendrick, however, reduced its contents to 58,200 acres, its length $\frac{1}{4}$, fifteen miles, and its breadth to seven. Doubierdieu says, “its extent from Toome, north-west to Kinnigogut, is fifteen Irish miles; its north-east and south-west extent from Shanes Castle to Blackwater, nearly the same; from east to west, the extent about nine miles and three furlongs. Its greatest meridional length is from Toome to Derryenver, twelve Irish miles, four furlongs; its shortest distance across from Arboe to Gartree point, is six miles.” He agrees with Sir Charles Coate in stating “the superficial contents, as taken at the ordinary height of the water, 60.361 Irish, or 97.775 English acres, which are equal to, or rather more than ninety-four and a half Irish square miles.”

The circumference is sixty-three miles, four furlongs, Irish measure, equal to eighty miles, six furlongs and a half, English. Colonel Heyland rode round the Lough, for a considerable bet, in some minutes less than six hours, by having fleet horses stationed at regular distances; this is about the same time in which the steam-boat usually performs her circuit. The height of the Lough above the sea, is stated by Dr. Berger, to be 132 feet. Townshend in his report, says, “the highest winter level of Lough Neagh, is forty-six feet three inches above the level of the sea.” When names, each of such high authority, differ so very widely in their statements, I can do no more than point out the incongruity.

The greatest depth of water, as ascertained in 1785, when it was lower than it had been remembered for many years back, was forty-five feet, between Arboe and Gartree Points. Lendrick mentions a singular circumstance, that the soundings were sometimes interrupted by the trunks of trees standing in an upright position, and these were most numerous near the mouth of the Blackwater. The general difference between the ordinary heights of the water, in winter and summer, may be about five feet and a half, when the lake is settled; but it has occasionally risen seven feet higher than in the summer of 1785. At Shanes Castle, it once rose seven feet nine inches, with an inblowing wind. *“The great ris-

* Doubierdieu.

ings of the waters after very rainy winters, and springs unfavourable to evaporation, gave birth to a publication from Francis Hutchison, then Lord Bishop of Down and Connor, printed in 1738; in which he affirms, that the waters of the lake were accumulating so much, that the church of Ballyscullen, was not only encompassed, but a great part of the parish overflowed; that great tracts of land once adorned with trees were covered; and that a fisherman having twice removed his habitation, was about to do so again, complaining that he knew not where to set it, for the Bann followed him." Though the encroachments of the Lough are not so terrible as the Bishop's fears represented them, the overflows sometimes occasion very great inconvenience, and even very serious losses. The fisherman's complaint may have arisen from a circumstance that admits of no doubt, that the Lough, like the sea, is encroaching upon the shores in some places, and receding from them in others. About Toome, the land is gaining on the water; towards Shanes Castle, the water is gaining on the land.

Whoever makes a circuit of the map of Lough Neagh, beginning at the northern, and proceeding round by the eastern shore, will observe eight pretty considerable rivers, besides brooks and rivulets, which flow into the lake. The Maine water, the Six-mile water, the Crumlin river, the Glenavy river, the Upper Bann, the Black water, the Ballinderry water, the Mayola water, all empty themselves, with numerous smaller streams, into the lake; and yet all this collected body of water, has but one visible discharge at Toome. "It has accordingly been remarked," says Barton,* "that the discharge seems vastly disproportionate, and inferior in quantity, to the sum of the inlets. Hence, some have been induced to suppose a subterraneous passage, to account for the discharge of the surplus mass of water, which otherwise should rise to a very considerable height. But inasmuch, as there appears not any sign of such passage on the lake, and which could not be concealed, was there any such thing, the influx of water at such a passage, in a lake every where shallow, necessarily occasioning a whirlpool dangerous to navigators; It seems reasonable to account for the height of the water, not ordinarily exceeding a particular known altitude, in the following manner. Before the autumnal season of the year, when the rain begins to soften the earth, and swell the rivers, the water discharged at Toome, is very inconsiderable, so as not to afford a greater depth, than that which might reach to the shoe-buckle, or to the knee of a person wading: and once it happened, that a person taking the opportunity of an in-

* *Lectures on Natural Philosophy*, by Richd. Barton, B.D. Dublin, 1751.

blowing wind, walked over dry shod. But at the same time, the influx of water is considerable. The Upper Bann, which may be supposed the greatest of the eight rivers (for it evidently gives a name to all the rest, when they flow in one channel to the sea, being called the lower Bann) has been frequently observed to have scarce any current water in it, immediately before the falling of the great rains. At the conclusion, therefore, of the summer, supposing it a dry season, there is very little water flowing into the Lough, since the other seven brooks or rivers are inferior to the Bann in quantity of water. When the rains fall in abundance, and the brooks or rivers swell above their banks, and continue so during five months, and sometimes more, there is a prodigious quantity of water; insomuch, that the discharge at Toome being vastly less, the water of the Lough rises, and spreads over about ten thousand acres of land, more than it does, when it is at the lowest. In the spring of the year, when the eight rivers are reduced to rivulets, by the drying winds in March and May, the influx of water is much less than the efflux; the discharge at Toome is all that time very considerable, and the Lough is every day subsiding."

The lake may in fact be viewed as an immense reservoir, in which that part of the river water that flows into it, which the lower Bann is unable to vent, is retained. This accumulation in the winter season increases, the river Bann overflows its banks, it becomes increased not only in width but in depth, and, owing to the additional pressure of the lake, in velocity also. Hence, after a short continuance of dry weather, the quantity of water issuing from the Lough, becomes equal to the influx, and the waters of the lake sink gradually down once more to their summer level.—Another circumstance must not be forgotten, evaporation. Supposing that during the hot weather, one tenth of one inch of water were raised in vapour from the surface of the lake, and calculating the lake as a square of fifteen English miles, the astonishing quantity of 864,250 tons, would be daily evaporated. This consideration, added to the causes previously mentioned, will be sufficient to account for what seems at first so surprising, that the efflux of water by one river, should be sufficient for the influx of eight.—The effects of draining Lough Neagh, or of lowering its surface, have been frequently discussed: but I shall reserve an account of these till another opportunity, and proceed with a view of objects, which are more attractive to a general observer.

ISLANDS.—The Lough is deficient in the bold and frowning headlands, and the picturesque islands, which constitute the charm of the Scotish lakes. It cannot in romantic interest

compare with Loch Katrine, in stern loneliness with Loch Lubnaig, in beauty with Loch Ard, in grandeur with Loch Lomond ; and it totally wants that variety of islands or sublimity of mountains for which these are so remarkable. He will, therefore, be disappointed, who expects here the descriptions of "the Ariosto of the north."—The islands may be easily enumerated. Cunny Island lies a short distance from the Armagh shore. A small cluster, known by the name of "the three Islands," is situated about four miles from the river Maine, off the point of the parish of Dunean. Lord O'Neill has planted all the islands with some young trees, which will, in a few years, prove exceedingly ornamental. On one of them he has built a neat and commodious cottage : from this island to the beach, a bank of sand and gravel, eighteen or twenty feet broad, extends. This, except in very dry seasons, is always covered with water ; but last summer it was completely exposed, as the water of the Lough was lower than for many preceding years. I had an opportunity of walking from the beach into the island (or to speak more correctly, to the end of the peninsula) accompanied by two friends, on the 11th of September, 1824. The bank was then broad, firm, and dry, resembling an artificial causeway, more than a natural deposit. Ram's Island lies off the parish of Glenavy, and is stated by Dr. Cupples, to be one mile two furlongs and two perches, (English measure) from the shore, and to contain seven acres of ground. A prescriptive title to this little spot, was acquired by Mr. David M'Arevey, a fisherman, who disposed of it to Conway M'Neice, Esq. for one hundred guineas. From him it passed into the hands of Mr. Whittle, who sold it to Earl O'Neill, (its present proprietor) for one thousand pounds. A cottage of extreme beauty, furnished in the most tasteful manner, has lately been erected on the island. The only object of antiquity, is a round tower, similar to that near Antrim, but not so lofty.

"Time with assailing arm
Hath smote the summit, but the solid base
Defides the lapse of ages."

" Its height," says the Rev. Dr. Cupples " is forty-three feet, its circumference thirty feet five inches, the thickness of the walls two feet eight inches and a quarter, from the surface, and contains the door ; in the second, is a window facing the south-east ; and in the third another window facing the north, about three feet high, and one and a half broad. There are two rests for joists ; and a projecting stone in the first story, about five feet and a half from the surface. Certain letters or characters appear to be cut in the stones in the inside, but so obliterated by time, as to be illegible. On going into the

building, there is a hollow sound or echo, which induced the person who at present lives in the island, to dig five feet below the surface, where he found several human bones, and some coffin boards. A skeleton was discovered near the tower some time ago, and bones and skulls in many parts of the island. These circumstances indicate that a place of worship once existed here; and sanction the opinion of Dr. Ledwick, that the round towers were appropriated to ecclesiastical purposes. It might also be inferred from this, that the island was, at no very remote period, a part of the continent. When the lake is at its summer level, a bank appears extending from the island towards Gartree Point." Last summer, a considerable part of the bank was exposed; and some who examined it, assert that the remains of a paved causeway are visible.

The entire ground is laid out into walks, and covered with verdure. Several hundred rose trees, and those plants and flowers which constitute the pride of our gardens, all flourish luxuriantly. Even those sides of the island, which are so steep as to be almost perpendicular, are adorned with all the creeping plants and hardy shrubs, which their situation allows them to receive. After sailing from the main land, while the rich hues of a summer evening are upon the waters, and the glory of a summer sun gilds the mountains that encircle them, when you arrive here, and wander amid the beauty of the flowers, breathe the fragrance they exhale, and enjoy the silence which dwells around, you seem to have attained in reality, one of those islands which Moore delights to describe,

" In the blue summer ocean far off and alone,
Where a leaf never dies in the still blooming bowers,
And the bee banquets on, through a whole year of flowers."

PETRIFACtIONS AND PEBBLES.—The productions for which Lough Neagh has been most celebrated, are its Petrifactions and Pebbles. Without dwelling on the accounts of some of our old Naturalists, that the water of the lake converted wood into stone, and its mud changed wood into iron, I shall proceed to make a few extracts, from a letter from Mr. James Simon, of Dublin, to Martin Folkes, Esq.: read to the Philosophical Society, in 1746. " Ferruginous, or metallic petrifying waters, mostly act by insinuating their finest particles, through the pores and vessels of the wood, or other vegetables, without increasing their bulk, or altering their texture, though they greatly increase their specific gravity; and such is the petrified wood found in or on the shores of Lough Neagh; for it did not show any outward addition or coalition of forcing matter, sticking to or covering it, (except in some places where a thin slimy substance is sometimes ob-

served) but preserved the grain and vestigia of wood ; all the alteration is in the weight and closeness, by the mineral particles pervading and filling the pores of the wood ; these stones, or rather wood stones, do not make the least effervescence with spirit or oil of vitriol, nor aquafortis, which shows they are impregnated with metallic particles, or stony ores, different from the calcareous kind. These stones I could not reduce into lime by the most intense fire ; nor with proper ingredients, procure a vitrification or fusion."—He endeavours to account for this, by supposing the existence of mineral springs, and says, he was informed that " in 1740, the lake was frozen over, so as to bear men on horseback, yet several circular spaces remained unfrozen." As no such springs now exist, we must either suppose, that they have become extinct, or admit (what is more probable) that Mr. Simon had been misinformed. The general opinion on this subject now, is, that a petrifying quality does exist, either in the waters of the lake, or the soil adjoining or underneath them. The latter supposition appears to me the more probable. The idea that this quality existed in the water of the lake, arose no doubt from the number of specimens found upon the beach, and supposed to have been cast ashore. But they rather appear to have been at one time or other, covered with a stiff clay, which the water could not penetrate, and exposed to the action of the waters, and a variety of other causes.—If the waters were the sole agents, how could petrifications occur, where they cannot possibly penetrate, as high up the Crumlin river, and in grounds at a distance from the lake, and far above its surface. An immense mass of petrifaction, was last summer (1824) removed from its position in this river, below Glendarroch, to Langford Lodge, the seat of the Hon. Col. Pakenham. Specimens of every variety of size, are found in the adjacent soil. Mr. Getty of Randalstown, informs me, that he saw a cow's stake, in the town-land of Caddy, three miles from the lake, that was partly petrified, in a most remarkable manner. The part sunk in the ground was completely stone, while that above was wood (holly) and might have been cut with an axe. Mr. P. S. Henry saw a range of paling at Millmount, the seat of Mr. Dickey, two miles from the Lough, which was petrified in a similar manner. A third gentleman has also informed me, that he has seen an instance of the part of a post under-ground, being completely converted into stone, while the part exposed to the air was in a state of decay. When three uninterested and unconnected individuals thus attest facts, which they had themselves observed, and all of which tend to prove the existence of a particular quality in the soil, their evidence must be considered

conclusive. Were more instances necessary, the situation of a bed of petrifications, at Aghaness (mentioned by Dr. Cupples) situated near the mouth of the Glenavy river, will show by its depth, that the water could not have been the agent in this operation. "A bed of blue clay four feet deep, is next the wood; above that a bed of red clay three feet deep; these two strata, have evidently been covered by a bank of twelve feet, that has been washed away by the encroachments of the lake, so that in the whole, this collection of petrifaction had been covered to a depth of nineteen feet." Another fact will show, that the water, when the substance was within its reach, did not cause petrifaction. In 1796, a canoe, composed of an entire block of oak, about twenty-five feet long, by four feet wide, was discovered immediately under the surface, on the shore of Lough Neagh, at Crumlin water foot. This vessel was of a rude construction, the bottom not being formed into a keel, and must have existed from a remote period. It was decayed in many places, but nowhere exhibited the smallest appearance of petrifaction. Two friends (whose names I forbear mentioning) had an opportunity, in company with myself, of making an observation of a similar nature. In a part of Dross Bay, near Toome, which in ordinary seasons is covered with the water, a bed of timber about fifty yards square was then exposed. It consisted of the roots, branches, and occasionally the trunks of oak and fir. They did not lie in any particular direction, but zigzag, and irregularly. Although the wood was embedded in the soil, with its upper surface exposed, and liable almost at all times to the action of the water, it nowhere exhibited the slightest appearance of petrifaction, but was on the contrary far advanced in a state of decay. The inference from so many well attested facts, naturally is, that the power of pretrification is inherent in the soil, rather than in the water.

The wood petrified, is generally called holly, but from the variety in the appearance of the grain, there must be several other kinds. Hazle nuts in a state of petrefaction, have been found, some of them exhibiting the kernel. Petrified substances, of natures totally different from either of these, have also been discovered. These masses, known by the names of petrified rushes, and weavers' empty rods, are evidently corallites; and those which from their construction are supposed to have been honey combs, are substances of a like nature, but different in form. Of the time required to effect this change, nothing positive is known. The belief that it takes place in seven years, is very general; but as I have never been able to meet a well authenticated instance of experiments to prove its taking place regularly, in any definite

time, I cannot offer any information on the subject. These petrified pieces of wood, when properly shaped and smoothed, make very excellent whet stones. So much are they celebrated, that the Dublin hawkers, when most clamorous in praise of their set stones, unanimously confer on them the title of "Lough Neagh hones."

"The pebbles," says Doubierdieu, "are all of the siliceous genus. They are either calcedony, which is met with in rounded masses, some of them nearly a pound weight, or, they are found in flat irregular shaped pieces, mostly with the corners rounded off by the motion of the waters. There have been instances, in which they have the appearance of having been in so soft a state, as to retain the impression of the bodies, between which they have lain. Though they are gathered daily on the shores, each storm exposes fresh ones to sight; the very deep red, and the light coloured with red veins, are considered the most valuable; many of the dark kinds have the solid rich appearance of the agate; others have the dots, veins, and figures, with which these stones are ornamented, in a ground nearly transparent." The pebble is of an extreme hardness, and (says Dr. Cupples) "next to the diamond, most difficult to be cut or polished. Hence, it possesses this advantage over stones, that when it is engraved, the impressions produced by it, never lose their sharpness. The great labour and art requisite to cut and polish it, make it of equal value with the cornelian, when applied to the purposes of use or ornament."* These pebbles, like the calcedony of the Causeway, have at one period been embedded in the basalt. The lapse of years, the action of the air, and a number of other causes, gradually convert the solid basalt into a crumbling stone, and finally into soil. The pebble, by its superior hardness, remains uninjured, and only awaits some external cause to be exposed.

Lough Neagh was formerly as much celebrated for its *power of healing sores* (which its name denotes) as for its petrifying qualities. The part most noted was Fishing Bay: and Boates, in his history of the County Down, gravely informs us, that "the first occasion of taking notice of this Bay for cure, is said to have been in the reign of Charles II., in the instance of the son of one Mr. Cunningham, who had an evil to that degree, that it ran on him in eight or ten places. He was touched by the King (to whose royal touch a virtue was at that time ascribed of healing this distemper) and all imaginable means were unsuccessfully used for his recovery: his body was so weak, that he could not walk; but at length he was bathed in this Lough for eight days, his sores were

* The different varieties of carundum, however, are harder than calcedony.

dried up, he grew healthy and married, begat children, and lived several years after." Such is the first account we have of any healing quality being ascribed to Lough Neagh. The following extract of a letter from Francis Neville, Esq. to the Lord Bishop of Clogher, published in the Philosophical Transactions for 1713, will show the length, to which the belief of its existence was afterwards carried. "That there is some healing quality in the water of the Lough, is certain; but whether diffused through all parts thereof, is not known nor pretended. There is a certain Bay in it, called Fishing Bay, which is about half a mile broad; it is bounded by the school lands of Dungannon; hath a fine sandy bottom, not a pebble in it, so that one may walk with safety and ease, from the depth of his ankle to his chin, upon an easy declivity, at least three hundred yards before a man shall come to that depth. I have been in it several times, when multitudes have been there, and at other times; and I have always observed, that as I have walked, the bottom has changed from cold to warm, and from warm to cold, and this in different spots through the bay. Several have made the same observation. Great crowds come there on midsummer eve, of all sorts of sick; and sick cattle are brought there likewise, and driven into the water for their cure, and people do believe they receive benefit. I know it dries up running sores, and cures the rheumatism, but not with one bathing, as people now use it; and the drinking of the water, I am told, will stop the flux." These miraculous properties have long since ceased; and even the greatest lover of the marvellous no longer argues for their existence, from the virtues of supposed springs at the bottom of the Lough. These springs can, indeed, be only some of those "airy nothings," which a credulous imagination loves to foster; for Mason mentions, that the Lough has been completely frozen over three times, in the memory of man. The last time, 1814, a singular spectacle was exhibited at Ram's island; Colonel Heyland rode from the shore there, and Mr. Whittle entertained the people with a drag chase on the ice, by his own dogs, round the island.

SUPERSTITIONS.—No part of the north of Ireland abounds more in legendary tales, or hereditary superstitions, than the shores surrounding Lough Neagh. I shall mention some of the most remarkable, as tending to illustrate the character of the inhabitants. Of the formation of the lake, two most wonderful accounts are given. One of them affirms that our Irish giant, Fin M'Cool, took up a handful of earth, and flung it in the sea. The handful was of such a size, that where it fell it formed the Isle of Man, and the hollow caused by its

removal, formed the basin of the present Lough Neagh ! The other account tells us, that some now forgotten Saint had sanctified some holy well, whose waters possessed in consequence the most miraculous properties. The only injunction attending their use was, that each person should carefully shut the wicket gate of the well containing them. A woman at length neglected this command ; the indignant waters sprang from their bed ; the terrified culprit fled ; but the waters followed close to her very heels, and when she sank down exhausted, closed for ever around her, and formed the present Lough, the length of which is just the distance she ran ! This story, I understand, is mentioned in Boates' history of the County Down, a work I have been unable to procure.

The idea of a town being buried under the waters of the lake, is very prevalent among the peasantry. Moore has not allowed so remarkable a belief to pass unnoticed. It is thus beautifully recorded :—

On Lough Neagh's banks as the fisherman strays,
When the clear cold eve's declining,
He sees the round towers of other days,
In the waves beneath him shining.

On the north side of the lake, is Cranfield well, an object of the most superstitious veneration. The ground rises suddenly—so that though the well is not more than four yards long, its broader and deeper end is overtopped by a perpendicular clay bank, of four or five feet in height. In this stand three of the venerated ancient white thorn trees, and fling their grotesque branches over the fount. About a mile distant, was an oaken cross, to mark the verge of the consecrated ground, but of this only the upright post is now remaining. The virtues attributed to this well, and the ceremonies practised here, are much the same as at Struile. The pilgrims assemble on the 27th, the 28th, and the 29th of June ; they go barefooted thirteen times round the walls of the church, an equal number of times round the well ; then drink of the water, wash in it, and are ready to commence the works of the flesh anew. In the well is found a number of yellow crystals, which the country people say, grow in a night's time, at midsummer eve, and possess the most miraculous properties. “ As long as you have one of them, your cows wont take any disease, your calves wont die of black-leg, your horse wont take the staggers, and above all, your wife will neither prove barren, nor die in child-bed ! ” The crystals are not peculiar to the well : they are found at all seasons, even at the distance of two miles from the spring. They are sometimes found in long irregular masses, composed of crystals shooting into one another in the crevices of rocks. Some of them put

into a crucible, become lime in an hour ; when pounded the powder is white, and ferments with spirit of vitriol. The waters of the Cranfield well were analyzed by Dr. M'Donnell of this town, who informs me, he did not discover in them any thing peculiar, nor could he detect the presence of lime, which (previous to the experiments) he had expected.

There were formerly other places along the shore of the Lough, as much frequented as Cranfield is now. Some fell into disuse, and the magistrates prevented the meetings at others, on account of the drunken quarrels and other evils, inseparable from so great an assemblage of people. At any meetings which are still held, it is pleasing to observe, that the revolting ceremonies practised at Struile, are discontinued ; and that music, dancing, drinking, &c. form now the principal attraction. There is a particular charm by which some people in Fervagh pretend to cure the Erysipelas. They repeat some words in an inaudible tone, and drive a horse shoe nail, or as they term it ‘stab,’ into the stake to which cows are fastened when in the ‘byre,’ and the cure is completed ! What those mystical words are, I have not been able to ascertain ; but the belief of their efficacy is universal among the Catholic peasantry, and extends more or less among the Presbyterians of the same district. From a gentleman “ instructed by tradition hoar,” I have received the following story of a remarkable stone brought from Lough Beg to Toome, where the tale is still current. “ The stone resembles the body of a horse, supposing the legs taken off, or a cask with hoops on the thickest part of it. It was brought from Church Island to Toome, and laid in front of a man’s house, where it was frequently used for a seat. It was considered a piece of skill to be able to lift it, and none were able to do so, who could not embrace it round the thickest part. All, however, who made the attempt, were visited with some misfortune. A number of calamities befel, also, the family who had removed it : so, about forty years ago, it was returned to its ancient place of rest, and as soon as it was placed on the island, sounds proceeded from it, like the ringing of several bells !”

To these remnants of the “ olden time,” may be added, the Banshee of Shanes Castle. Miss Balfour remarks, “ What rank the Banshee holds in the scale of spiritual beings, it is not easy to determine ; but her favourite occupation, seems to have been that of foretelling the death of the different branches of the families over which she presided, by the most plaintive cries. She appears to have been of a vindictive nature, revenging every insult, particularly depredations on the white thorn tree, which was sacred to her, and more

immediately under her protection. Many stories to this purpose, are related by the lower class in Ireland, and even Christianity has not been able to destroy those superstitious ideas. In the Author's own time, she has known many respectable people credulous on this point." As every great family had formerly its Banshee, the one at Shanes Castle was distinguished by the name of Mavin Roe. Around their description of the burning of the Castle, the country people have thrown a sufficient stock of the marvellous. First, there were

" Lamentings heard i' the air ; strange screams of death ;
 " And prophesying with accents terrible,
 " Of dire combustion."

Next the Banshee herself appeared,

" And wrung her tiny hands, and faintly scream'd ;"

and finally, when the building was enveloped in flames, aerial beings were seen,

————— " To fly—to swim—
 " To dive into the fire—to ride on the curled clouds."

Since that event, the Banshee has neither been seen nor heard—the belief of her existence is fading rapidly away—and the storied records of her deeds, will soon become "a tale of the times of old—the voice of years that are gone."

P—.

I S A B E L.

Poor Isabel ! though from thy brow
 That joyous light hath faded now,
 Which erst it wore in that gay time,
 When thy young heart was in its prime—
 Though from thine eye the ray hath fled,
 Which kindled love where'er it shone;
 And every tint that beauty shed
 Upon thy smiling cheek, be gone—
 Poor Isabel ! can I forget
 What once thou wert—when first we met?
 Can I forget the happy hour,
 When first I saw thy beauty's power ;
 When though the fairest round thee prest,
 Yet, thou wert still the loveliest :
 And ev'ry eye on thee was turn'd,
 And ev'ry heart in secret burn'd,
 With feelings which it fear'd to own,
 Or breathe, except in sighs alone ?—
 O thou wert then a form so bright,
 Who could have dream'd that time could bring
 The deadly blast of grief to blight
 So lovely and so fair a thing ?
 Yet thou art changed—thy beauty's flown,
 That bloom'd so gay in morning's hour,
 E'er yet thy noon of life hath past,
 Lies withered by the scorching blast—
 Poor Isabel ! till o'er thy breast
 The spell-bound chain of love was thrown,
 Each rapturous hope of life was blest,
 And all its dearest joys thine own,